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## CLAIMS

- 1           1.       A method for managing at least one storage device, comprising the steps of:  
2           (a) identifying the one storage device;  
3           (b) establishing a database containing information about the identified device;  
4           (c) providing to the user a graphical user interface in accordance with the information in  
5 the database, the graphical interface displaying at least one menu option for the identified device  
6 for selection by the user to request at least one of (i) display of information and (ii) execution of  
7 at least one process to control the operation of the one storage device;  
8           (d) processing the selected menu option; and  
9           (e) automatically updating the graphical user interface in response to the processing of the  
10 selected menu option.
- 1           2.       The method according to claim 1 wherein the step of identifying the one storage  
2 device comprises the step of ascertaining a manufacturer and model number for the one storage  
3 device.
- 1           3.       The method according to claim 1 wherein the step of establishing a database  
2 comprises the step of obtaining information that includes at least one of (a) operational rules, (b)  
3 commands and (c) processing routines of the one storage device.
- 1           4.       The method according to claim 3 wherein the processing step includes  
2 determining if the requested execution of the at least one process complies with the  
3 operational rules for the identified device, and if not,  
4 blocking execution of the at least one process; and  
5 generating an error message.
- 1           5.       The method according to claim 1 wherein the step of providing a graphical user  
2 interface includes the steps of:  
3 displaying icons representative of each identified devices in a hierarchical fashion in a  
4 first pane; and  
5 displaying information in a second pane related a corresponding one of the icons  
6 displayed in a first pane.

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1           6.       The method according to claim 1 wherein steps (d) and (e) are repeated following  
2 receipt of each subsequent menu selection made by a user.

1           7.       Apparatus for managing at least one storage device, comprising:  
2           a database containing information about potential storage devices; and  
3           a processor coupled to at least one storage device for (a) identifying the one storage  
4 device; (b) providing to a user a graphical user interface in accordance with the information in  
5 the database, the graphical interface displaying at least one menu option for the identified device  
6 for selection by the user to request at least one of (i) display of information and (ii) execution of  
7 at least one process to control the operation of the one storage device; (d) processing the selected  
8 menu option; and (e) automatically updating the graphical user interface in response to the  
9 processing of the selected menu option.

1           8.       The apparatus according to claim 7 wherein the processor identifies the one  
2 storage device by ascertaining its manufacturer and model number.

1           9.       The apparatus according to claim 7 database contains information that includes at  
2 least one of (a) operational rules, (b) commands and (c) processing routines of the one storage  
3 device.

1           10.      The apparatus according to claim 7 wherein the processor process the selected  
2 menu option by (a) determining if the requested execution of the at least one process complies  
3 with the operational rules for the identified device, and if not, (b) blocking execution of the at  
4 least one process; and (c) generating an error message.

1           11.      The apparatus according to claim 7 wherein the processor provides the graphical  
2 user interface by (a) displaying icons representative of each identified devices in a hierarchical  
3 fashion in a first pane; and (b) displaying information in a second pane related a corresponding  
4 one of the icons displayed in a first pane.